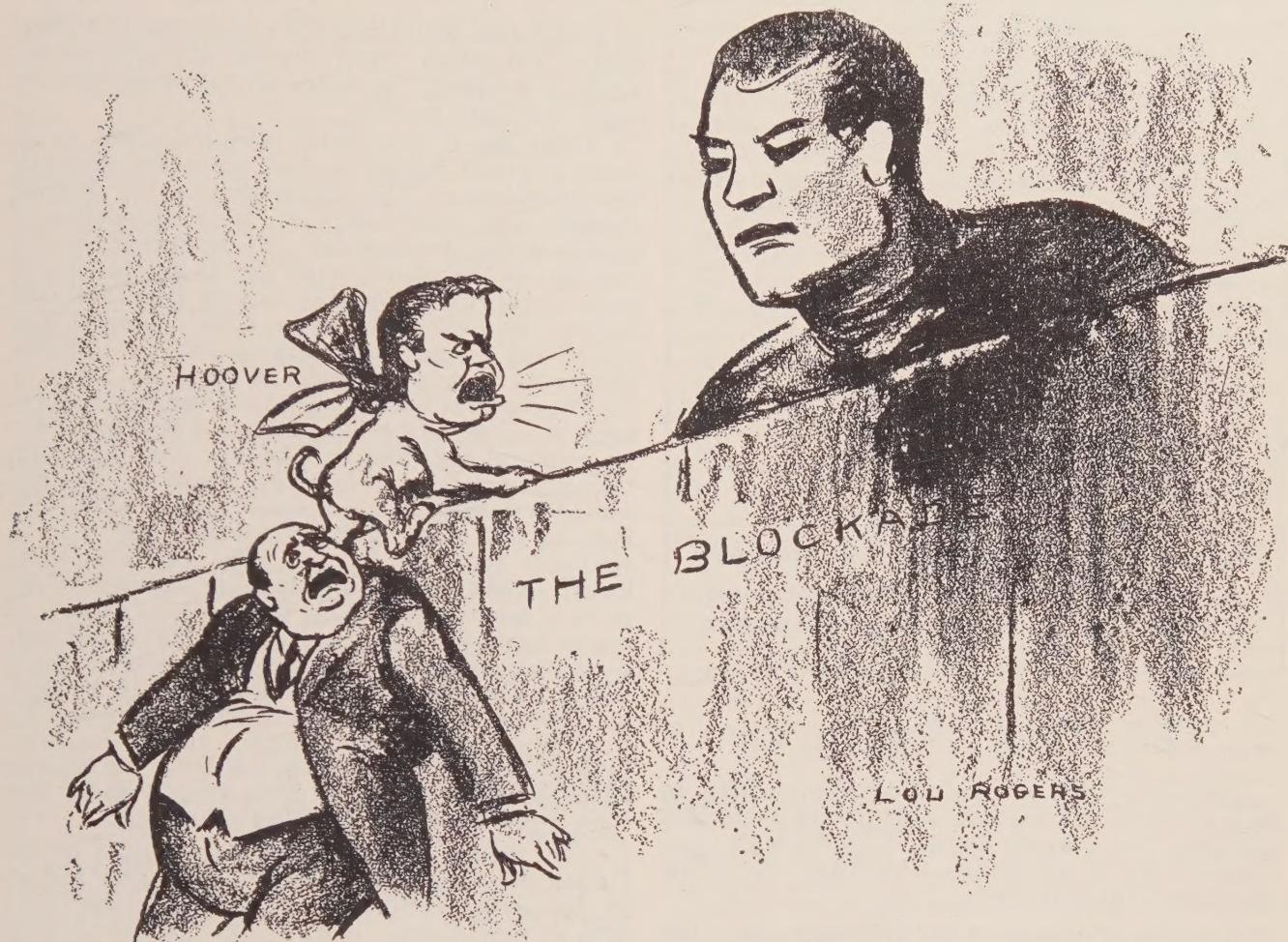


The Workers' Council

Vol. I.

New York, April 15, 1921.

No. 2.



"Sic him, Fido!"

Russian Trade and the Economic Crisis in America

The Resurrected Second International

The Fight of the American Farmer

O, The Wicked Marx !

TEN CENTS A COPY

TWO DOLLARS FIFTY CENTS A YEAR

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The Task Before Us

France, with a heritage of four revolutions, in each of which the working class played a glorious and heroic part, stands out today as the most reactionary force of all Europe,—the backbone of the organized White Terror.

America likewise has a revolutionary past. The American Revolution, engineered by Committees of Correspondence working in secret, had for its chief motive, the removal of British restrictions on colonial trade. The revolution was carried through successfully by an armed dictatorship, which ruthlessly crushed out all opposition. Those who opposed the revolution were deprived of the vote and of their property, and in many cases were killed by the American rebels. Under the banner of the Declaration of Independence, with its 18th century revolutionary ideals of Equality and Liberty, the farmers were urged to overthrow the yoke of England. Just as soon as the revolution succeeded, this same conscious minority, no longer in need of a revolutionary shibboleth with which to arouse the masses to fight their masters' battles, threw overboard the notions of liberty and equality and under the leadership of Hamilton and Madison, fastened on the American people a constitution and a form of government calculated to forever prevent the American people from doing to the property of the ruling classes what they had just done to the property of the English.

In the words of James Madison, the father of the Constitution, it was necessary to create a form

of government which had the appearance of a democracy, but which would prevent any possible inroads on property. He succeeded far better than he could ever have realized.

Today the United States faces the world as its most powerful nation and at the same time the most reactionary. Although possessing the weakest Socialist and most backward labor movement, it professes the greatest fear of revolution. In no country in the world, with the exception of the realm over which Hangman Horthy rules with the help of the Entente Allies, have the holders of Socialist and Communist opinions been so bitterly persecuted as in the United States.

The backwardness of the American labor movement is universally acknowledged. The reasons for its weakness are quite well known. For one thing, the mass of immigrant labor has prevented the normal growth of the labor movement and the development of that class solidarity which is met with in England, Italy, or France. The capitalist class has again and again been able to use the alien worker as a means of dividing the ranks of labor. As native labor was displaced by the immigrant, opposition to foreigners was quick to develop. Since radical ideas were in many cases brought to America by German and other immigrants, antipathy towards the foreigner was extended also to his ideas, so that it was often a sufficient answer to the theories advanced by Socialism to prove that it was a foreign importation and therefore condemned.

Then again, one tenth of the population of the United States is colored. In the South they are regarded as the legitimate prey for the whites to do with as they please. Used at first for the purpose of maintaining the supremacy of the Republican Party, the Negroes have in addition been used to prevent the whites from acquiring an intelligent interest in social and industrial matters, by the continual keeping alive of the race question.

What has contributed very materially to the backwardness of the movement and its lack of understanding of the workings of the capitalist system, is the extent of the continental areas of the United States. The wide expanse of Russia has helped to save the revolution from succumbing to the attacks of the capitalist world. In a country like Italy or England it would have been forced to capitulate long ago. The wide expanse of the American continent however, has contributed powerfully in keeping the labor movement stagnant.

The West has constantly served to drain the boldest spirits in the ranks of the industrial workers of the East. To those who were dissatisfied with the drab monotonous life of a slave in a New England mill, the West served as a haven of refuge. Those who lacked initiative and imagination stayed behind. From these the masters have little to fear. In this manner the West with the opportunities which it opened up, served to generate the spirit of

self-reliance and independence, so characteristic of the mental attitude of many Americans. With the completion of the trans-continental railroads and the consequent widening of the market, and the growth of capitalism, there were countless opportunities for individual successes. There developed a widespread notion that success comes to those who deserve it, to those who possess ability and who strive conscientiously, and only the slothful and lazy complain of their misfortune. This was daily and hourly impressed upon the American worker. Those who were the loudest in preaching it, were the very ones who were using the government to protect their interests by the passage of tariff bills, or were intent upon getting congressional aid in acquiring huge grants of public lands, or were busily engaged in securing lucrative franchise rights at the expense of the people. It was useful to impress upon the people the notion that if they were exploited, if they worked hard for less than a bare existence wage, they had themselves to blame, for were they possessed of ability, ingenuity, and thrift, they would also be members of the possessing class.

There were always just enough examples to make this treacherous doctrine seem a reality. The workers consequently, instead of turning to their fellow-workers to seek a way out, instead of reaching out to their class, instead of realizing the strength of their organized power, and learning to use it as a means of destroying a system which kept them in wage slavery, turned to themselves, relying upon their individual ability to raise themselves above the level of the wage worker. They refused to accept their economic status as more than a temporary condition.

The schools and colleges, the churches, the press and the magazines have constantly emphasized the same notion. In addition they have impressed upon the American people the "democratic" nature of our form of government, with its political liberty and equality; the possibility of changing our form of government through the ballot any time the people wanted to; that in America there are no classes, etc. No mention was made of the fact that the framers of the Constitution never intended to create a democracy; that the mere formal political equality which had developed was almost worthless as a protection to the workers; that political rights without economic power behind them conferred no power at all.

The average American carries around with him the illusions which the ruling class has impressed upon him through the various agencies which shape men's ideas. And so we have developed what is usually referred to as the "American psychology," which means fundamentally, opposition to things radical.

* * *

The A. F. of L., organized in the '80's, decided to hold aloof from any efforts to supplant capitalism either through cooperation, greenbackism, Socialism or Anarchism. It accepted capitalism and the existing prejudices and notions of the people. Its object was the enlarging of the bargaining power of the workers. It based its form of organization on the existing skilled crafts with craft autonomy and

a loose form of national organization to give freer play to the prejudices of the existing national craft unions against a centralized form of organization.

In 1921, in spite of the many industrial changes which have taken place since the A. F. of L. was organized, in spite of the fact that the craft no longer is as important as it formerly was; in spite of the growing tendency of modern industry to reduce the skilled to the level of the unskilled and to wipe out craft lines, the A. F. of L. in the main maintains the old, outworn form of organization. In spite of the ever growing concentration in industry and finance, in spite of the increasing concentration of ownership and control, the A. F. of L. resists every attempt of reorganization along industrial lines. It prefers to keep the workers divided into 110 independent little armies. It separates the workers in one industry into as many as 20 or more different craft organizations. Intent on preserving advantages already gained, the A. F. of L. far from attempting to organize the workers, has erected numerous bars against the admission of the unskilled, the women and the colored workers.

In spite of the gradual and steady passing of the possibility of rising out of the ranks of the working class and the hardening of class lines, the old psychology developed in the days of free Western land still dominates the A. F. of L. and large masses of the American people. A. F. of L. officials join with the leaders of Capitalism in annual love feasts at meetings of the Civic Federation. The officials of the Miners recall a strike order because in the words of Lewis "We cannot fight *our* government." Johnston the erstwhile Socialist expels members of the Machinists who belong to the O. B. U. Farrington of the Miners does the same to members of the S. L. P. and Max Hayes keeps a watchful eye over erring brothers caught reading I. W. W. literature. The A. F. of L. will allow no assault to be made on the sacred illusions of the American people. It will fight to the last ditch to uphold the notion that this is a "representative" government; that Capital and labor are brothers, even though brother capital does occasionally misbehave as at Ludlow or Calumet. Alone among the Labor organizations of the World it is opposed to Socialism, finding even the yellow Amsterdam International too Red.

* * *

On the political field after many abortive beginnings, there finally developed the S. L. P. with its policy of opposition to the A. F. of L. Many short lived Labor parties and radical farmers' parties with more or less fantastic programs of reform had appeared on the scene in the meantime.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the elements in revolt against the S. L. P. organized the American Socialist Party on a program of Marxian Socialism. Instead of open opposition to the A. F. of L. it planned to "bore from within" and capture it for Socialism. Its literature and its propaganda was dominated rather by the spirit of social justice and the program of government ownership than a distinct and frank recognition of the theory of the class struggle and relentless war against the capitalist system. It failed to train its membership in a proper and intelligent understand-

ing of the principles of Socialism. Large sections of its membership and following were frequently found voting for Hearst and municipal ownership one year, Roosevelt and social justice the next, Wilson and peace in 1916 and "anything to beat Wilson" in 1920.

During the war, the Socialist Party for a time moved definitely toward the Left. It supported the Zimmerwald and Kienthal resolution condemning the World War. At St. Louis in April 1917, it adopted a ringing manifesto against America's entrance into the war and called for mass opposition to it. The workers, dominated by fear of the power of the state, and suffocated by the propaganda of the Church, the Press and the A. F. of L. however failed to follow the lead of the Socialist Party.

As the war progressed a ruthless campaign of terrorism against Socialists was inaugurated. The representatives of the party in Congress and in the New York Board of Aldermen failed utterly to maintain the declared position of the party. A dissatisfaction long brewing because of the opportunist tactics of the officialdom finally resulted in the organization of a Left Wing within the Party, which quickly secured control of a majority of the membership. What followed is well known. The National Executive Committee of the Party, following an election which swept the old officials out of office, suspended and expelled many of the State and local organizations and language federations on the ground of fraud and violation of the Party Constitution. Its action was sustained at the September 1919 Chicago Convention. Had a number of left delegates who refused to take their seats, sat in the Convention, the N. E. C. would have been repudiated in spite of the suspensions, and they would have captured the convention.

Following the convention, the Socialist movement was left hopelessly divided into two communist factions with a membership of 55,000 and a Socialist Party of about 40,000 members. In January 1920 began the government policy of wholesale raids of communist party members, the declaring of the communist party as an illegal organization and the consequent driving of the movement underground. The two Communist parties now began to lose greatly in membership. The inability or refusal of the leaders to unify the two parties no doubt contributed to this decline. The feeling that an underground movement could not hope to reach the masses with the message of Communism at the present time and dissatisfaction with the extremely military form of organization adopted by the party also helped to reduce the membership. In addition the terrorism of the government officials played havoc with what remained. It must also be borne in mind that a great many Socialist Party members had been transferred bodily into the Communist factions without really knowing that they had so been transferred.

In spite of the "red" raids, there were many unmistakable signs of a growing sympathy for Soviet Russia and revolutionary Socialism. There began a steady decrease in the membership of the Socialist Party due entirely to its failure to recognize the temper of the conscious elements among the workers. The decline was especially marked after

the disgraceful surrender at Albany where the party leaders sought to capitalize the existing American prejudices and illusions about Democracy and Republican Government and the sacredness of the ballot. Instead of using the Albany ouster as a means of analyzing and exposing these notions the Party suddenly leaped forth as the defender of the Constitution, as the only party that stood for American liberties. The "Eye Opener", the official organ of the party, carried as a sub-head "For a free press, free speech and free assemblage."

The process of Americanizing the Socialist Party went merrily onward at the May 1920 convention: only citizens were hereafter to be entitled to hold office in the Party; the clause prohibiting Socialist elected officials from voting for militarism was stricken out, and the party went out to teach the workers that it would make no effort to inaugurate a Socialist regime until it had attained a majority in every branch of the government and in every state legislature. It would be hard to find a similar declaration in any Socialist platform in any other country. Again there was a marked decline in membership. In July the New York State convention wiped out the constitutional clause calling for party control of elected officials. At the special elections in September 1920, to fill the places of the five ousted Assemblymen, the campaign was made entirely on the basis of Americanism and Democracy. Speeches of Hughes and Untermyer and editorials of the *World* were circulated widely. The climax of a policy of opportunism had been reached. The New York State Executive Committee was even moved to sound a note of warning at the conduct of this campaign.

The S. P. stands at present discredited in the eyes of the class conscious workers of America. Like the A. F. of L. it has failed to analyze and expose without mercy the so-called American psychology; to destroy the lying notions upon which the workers have been fed. On the contrary it has sought to utilize them, to build on them for temporary political victories, victories which have in every case proved to be harmful to the cause of Socialism.

Neither can a movement entirely separated from the mass of the workers and unable to bring its message to them at their shop meetings, in the press and at the street corner, succeed in breaking down the wall of prejudice against radicalism which the A. F. of L. has helped build up and perpetuate. Such a movement is perforce handicapped in teaching the masses the doctrines of Marx and Engels.

America is the only important country without a powerful Socialist or Communist movement. The elements are present, namely a highly developed capitalism and a proletariat unable to escape from the class into which it is born. The ideas, the principles upon which a movement must be based have been clearly enunciated by the revolutionary parties of the world meeting in the two congresses of the Third International.

The movement which is to succeed in leading the working class of America must affirm its faith in Revolutionary Socialism, in the class struggle, in proletarian dictatorship, and in a form of government based on Workers' Councils. It must com-

pletely abandon reformism and the notion of "growing into" Socialism; it must organize its propaganda so as to reach every element of the population; the farmer, the Unions, the army, the co-operatives, etc. And the organization itself must be a central-

ized one, with control over the various units, the press, the elected officials, etc., and at the same time subject to the control of the membership. Only such an organization can rally to its support the intelligent and class conscious workers of America.

Editorials

LONG LIVE THE HONEST JUDGE!

The battle that is being waged by the organized clothing manufacturers all over the East and the Middle West against the Amalgamated Clothing Workers has been an object lesson well worth the closer attention of organized labor. That it has, in the main, been fought out before the courts, because the manufacturers hoped to exhaust the financial strength of the organization by expensive legal proceedings, serves only to add to its significance. No piece of radical literature, no inflammatory speech could demonstrate more clearly the hopelessness of the workingmen's position in present day society, could show with more brutal frankness that all the powers of the state, from the meanest policeman on his rounds, to the highest courts in the country, stand in a solid phalanx to protect the interests of the capitalist class.

But of all the decisions rendered against the Amalgamated in the last few weeks and months, none deserves more credit for frankness than that of Judge James C. van Siclen of the Brooklyn Supreme Court. In granting an injunction against the Amalgamated to the firm of Schwartz & Jaffee, Inc., the judge leaves nothing to the imagination. Indeed were it not signed by his Honor's name, portions of his statement, we fear, would be sufficient to land some unfortunate communist in jail. Surely one can hardly ask for a more masterly and more convincing exposition on the existence of a bitter class-struggle in the United States than that here given:

"The issue between the parties," says Judge van Siclen, "is nothing more than the old conflict between capital and labor. The swing of the pendulum is influenced almost entirely by the law of supply and demand, and neither capital nor labor at any time is satisfied to be governed by the length or sweep to and fro. . . . When capital has the upper hand it will continue to grind down labor, and when labor is in the ascendant it will in turn continue to harass, cheat and seek to either control or destroy capital. Neither at any time is willing to give the quid pro quo, and the never ceasing conflict goes on. . . ."

There is nothing new in the foregoing sentences, to be sure, nothing that has not been said over and over again by every socialist writer and speaker since the time when Marx and Engels first based their messages to the working-class upon that same fundamental theory of the class war. New, however, is the official recognition of this class war by an American Court of Justice. Hitherto it has been the established custom of all courts where conflicts between capital and labor were brought to trial, to cling to the old fiction that all men in this republic are free and equal before the law. Judge van Siclen scorns such shallow pretense. With Karl Marx he

recognizes the existence of a class-struggle, of a "never ceasing conflict." With Karl Marx he recognizes that no man can hope to do justice to both sides, that the "courts cannot find the balancing point by boxing the compass of judicial opinion from extreme radicalism to ultra-conservatism." He openly admits that in a conflict between labor and capital "*The courts must stand at all times as the representatives of capital, of captains of industry, devoted to the principle of individual initiative, protect property and persons from violence and destruction, strongly opposed to all schemes for the nationalization of industry, and yet save labor from oppression, and conciliatory toward the removal of the workers' just grievances.*"

In other words, Judge van Siclen realizing that there can be no neutrality, no understanding, no justice between capital and labor, places the judiciary of the country four square upon the side of capital, proclaiming to the world the dictatorship of the ruling class, upheld and perpetuated by the courts in the name of democracy.

We who have spent a lifetime in the vain endeavor to bring this truth home to the American working-class, owe Judge van Siclen a vote of thanks. When once these representatives of justice have shown to a disillusioned working-class that the courts are but the servants, the lackeys, of their oppressors, when labor loses its blind reverence for the impartial sacredness of our courts and of our laws and institutions, when it learns, like Judge van Siclen, to take sides in the class war, our work is almost done.

PROPERTY-HOLDERS, UNITE!

To the advanced proletariat and to socially-minded, thinking men and women of America generally it is a truism that the American Constitution is, as it was intended to be by its authors, a bulwark of private property, a guarantee of the perpetuation of the class-rule of the property-owning classes. So, while it is not surprising to us that the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in affirming the conviction of Ben Gitlow declared the anarchy law passed in the excitement following the assassination of President McKinley to be in full accord with the Constitution, this will be a healthy shock to the many sincerely liberal Americans who have been accustomed to regard the Constitution as an instrument of democratic rule and a safeguard of popular liberties.

To prove that Gitlow "feloniously advocated, advised and taught the duty, necessity, and propriety of overthrowing and overturning organized Government by force, violence and unlawful means," it was merely necessary for Justice Laughlin to point to the "criminal doctrines" contained in the "Left

Wing Manifesto," which states that the use of violence on the part of the possessing class in holding down the expropriated workers was forcing the latter to adopt similar means to free themselves from capitalist oppression.

"The doctrines advocated are. . . a menace, and it behooves Americans to be on their guard to meet and combat a movement which. . . may undermine and endanger our cherished institutions of liberty and equality." Emigration must be carefully supervised and "the people" "aroused to the danger to be apprehended from the propaganda of class prejudice and hatred, carried on by a very small minority mostly of foreign birth," and then no doubt those "God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans. . . who appreciate the equal opportunity for all. . . afforded by our constitutional form of government and have made and are making sacrifices to improve their condition. . . and to accumulate property for themselves and for those who come after them, will see to it that these pernicious doctrines are not permitted to take root in America."

This constitutional appeal to "class prejudice and hatred," this call to arms issued to the "God-fearing and liberty-loving" Americans, whose love of liberty extends solely to the liberty of unlimited "accumulation of property," is hardly necessary at this time. That "very small minority" of bona fide, hundred per cent Americans who have any property worth defending have long since rallied to our "cherished institutions of liberty and equality" with a vigorous campaign against the menacing hordes of those who possess nothing except their labor power, which they must sell for what it will bring or face the alternative of starvation and death.

But the well-planned campaign with its manœuvres of wage-reductions and further enslavement of the worker on the job and of wrecking the defensive organizations of the toiling masses, is having a contrary effect to that intended by its marshals. It is consolidating the ranks of the propertyless, teaching them by "blood and iron" the lesson of the class struggle, teaching it to them in an even more effective manner than the few Communist "agitators" ever could, on whom the judicial defenders of our property-holder constitution may take a cheap revenge by condemning them to heavy sentences in the penitentiary.

O, THE WICKED MARX!

Surely, public understanding of the revolutionary working-class movement has penetrated far into the minds of the American public, when even the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in Brooklyn begins to show a glimmering of understanding. The learned judges who decide upon the weal and woe of their fellow beings, and whose highest duty lies in the defense and the perpetuation of this blessed god-given social system, have just discovered that, from the point of view, at least, of the Honorable Judges Mills, Rich, Blackmar, Kelly and Joycox, there is nothing in the principles of the Socialist Party, "however repugnant to our minds and consciences the socialist program may be, to stand in the way of its organization to promote its accom-

plishment, provided only that it is clear that the purpose and intent of these organizations is to seek the accomplishment of that purpose by lawful methods, that is to change our form of government by amending the Constitution through constitutional methods. It may be remarked in passing, that, whatever may have been or may now be the situation in any other country, there can be in this country no sort of moral excuse even for advocacy of a resort to any other means of accomplishing such a change. By the adoption of the Prohibition and Universal Suffrage Amendments we have recently had very striking examples of the practical ease and celerity with which our Constitution may be radically amended."

What was the occasion for such a declaration of faith in the absolute harmlessness of the Socialist Party, and the assurance that its introduction of the socialist state of society will be brought about with the mild flutter that followed upon the adoption of the Prohibition and Suffrage amendments? The Lithuanian Literature Society, an organization of Lithuanian workingmen, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, had stated in its charter that only "members of the Socialist Party of America, or of the legitimate successors of that party. . . shall be entitled to membership in its ranks. It happens, however, that at the present time, the Lithuanian comrades, for reasons best known to themselves, and easily divined by others, have preferred to leave the ranks of the Socialist Party in such numbers that the existence of the above-named organization is practically terminated. For this reason it has found it necessary to apply for a change in the charter providing that "membership in this corporation shall be limited to individuals who are not opposed to the organization of the workers, politically or economically, in organizations which subscribe to Marxian principles approved by the majority of the members of this corporation." To this change the court has declared itself unalterably opposed. For the court in its eternal wisdom has discovered that to be a believer in the principles of Marx may, and in all probability does mean, to believe not only in the overthrow of the government, but to entertain an avowed suspicion that the capitalist class will not allow the workers to deprive them of their means of exploitation with the same calm cheerfulness that the workers of the United States displayed in the face of the Prohibition amendment.

But the Socialist Party of America will be good under all circumstances. Say the Judges of the Appellate Division:

"In the interim before the last general election the Socialist Party, at least in this state, amended its platform so as to make it clear that it stands for the attainment of its ultimate object, the proposed change of social and government systems, by constitutional methods only. Upon its platform as amended several members of the Assembly were elected to and even accepted by the present Assembly, and are now acting as members thereof. The effect of that amending of the platform of that party would, according to the terms of the present seventh article of petitioner's certificate of incorporation, operate, *ipso facto*, to expel or withdraw

from the membership of the petitioner every Socialist who holds to the doctrine of so-called direct action, that is, the attainment of the desired revolution by forcible means. Upon the other hand, the effect of the proposed amendment will be to retain such persons in petitioner's present membership, and even to admit thereto others of the same kind. Indeed, in the premises no other adequate reason for the desired change is perceived. This Court cannot approve any such scheme, or in any manner contribute to any such result."

The Lithuanian Literature Society will probably bear up under the blow. A rose by any other name

will smell as sweet. . . . And convenient as incorporation under the law may be, it is by no means an unmixed blessing.

But how about the Socialist Party? Will it calmly submit while the honorable gentlemen purge it of every last vestige of Marrian principles? Must it not fear that, when once the rank and file discovers the truth, when once the secret is out and the cat, that was so securely tied up by a lot of revolutionary-sounding red-tape, is once let out of the bag, that it will wake up to the fact that for once the court was right, and that there is, in truth, no Marxism left in the Socialist Party?!

Russian Trade and the Economic Crisis in America

The United States Government, through Secretary Hughes, in his note of March 25 answering the Soviet Government's proposal of March 21 for the opening of trade relations between Russia and America, refuses to change the position held heretofore, except on condition that

"If fundamental changes are contemplated, involving due regard for the protection of persons and property and the establishment of conditions essential to the maintenance of commerce, this Government will be glad to have convincing evidence of the consummation of such changes, and until this evidence is supplied this Government is unable to perceive that there is any proper basis for considering trade relations."

Four days earlier, Secretary Hoover issued a statement, evidently on his personal responsibility, opposing Russian Trade, for the reason that "the question of trade with Russia is more political than economic and that there are no export commodities in Russia today worth consideration."

Secretary Hoover says:—you can't trade with Russia because she has nothing to export; but Secretary Hughes says:—if fundamental changes are contemplated. . . . then there will be a basis for considering trade relations. There is evidently a discrepancy in the views of the two secretaries. Hoover refuses to trade altogether, Hughes would trade under certain conditions. These two points of view are very clearly established in Europe by the French and English attitude toward Soviet Russia. Hoover in this instance expresses the French point of view,—the view of Clemenceau and Foch, of whom Secretary Hoover is so great an admirer. Clemenceau's position is well known; he would strangle Soviet Russia if he could. The present militaristic and reactionary government of France takes the position of the relentless creditor who insists upon his pound of flesh; in order to collect the eight billions of old Czarist debts from Russia, she has spent billions of gold and thousands of human lives in warring on Soviet Russia. Mr. Hoover would strangle Russia by keeping the blockade around her. Mr. Hughes, like the English, is inclined to negotiate. But not having a formidable labor movement to force him to negotiate, he is in no hurry. He practically says to the Russians: First

change your form of government and we'll do business with you.

In this connection, Mr. Hughes seems to accept Mr. Hoover's point of view that the question of trade with Russia is more political than economic. He can do so because the laboring people of the United States to whom the question of Trade with Russia is one of life and death, are so badly organized economically and politically that they have not a show with the government. Mr. Timothy H. Healy, president of the American Labor Alliance for Trade Relations with Russia sent the following telegram on March 23rd to President Harding and Secretary Hughes:

"In behalf of the 2,500,000 organized workers who indorsed our program—the immediate resumption of trade with Russia—we call upon you to give careful consideration to the message addressed to you by the Russian Soviet Government in which it proposes to send a delegation to the United States to negotiate a trade agreement.

"Unemployment in the United States is constantly increasing, and we believe that the resumption of trade with Russia will supply work to a large percentage of the approximately 5,000,000 American unemployed workers.

"We hope that your administration will not follow the policy of the last administration which interfered with the politics of a foreign country; but will look after the interests of the American people."

Yet the note of Secretary Hughes to Russia does not bear any evidence of any consideration of the demand of the 2,500,000 organized workers. And why? The answer is that the refusal to consider Russia's proposal for opening of trade is part of the plan of the Capitalist Class in America to crush American Labor. It is part of the deflation process by which American farmers were made to accept a loss on agricultural products of five billion dollars last year; it is part of the "open shop" drive, which already resulted in throwing five million men out of work, and bringing the standard of living down 30 per cent for those who still hold jobs. The Capitalist Class, powerfully organized, entrenched at Washington, does not care anything about the politics of Soviet Russia. What it is after is to "improve labor's morale" in America," "to have

labor eat out of our hand" by the process of unemployment and starvation. Do our statesmen at Washington and Wall Street care about the fact that even in the most prosperous year of our blessed prosperity 1918, 37 per cent of families in New York and Chicago are obliged to go without meat, 39.6 per cent cannot afford to buy eggs and 18.5 per cent must get along without fresh milk? Do they know or care that over half of the families investigated in these two imperial cities by the Health authorities, have incomes of less than \$900 per year, which is 50 per cent below the minimum subsistence level for a family of five? What's the result? Under-nourishment for a large part of our population, undermined health, incapacity. Mr. Hoover is solicitous about the "underclad population" of Russia. How many children in this country have to go without shoes or sufficient clothing!

United States trade with Soviet Russia is an American not a Russian problem. For the Russian peasant and workman can, if forced to, get along without American machinery, American shoes or cotton. England, Canada, Sweden and other European countries can supply their pressing needs for many years to come—Russia may simply have to reduce her ambitious program of reconstruction, of electrification, mining or railway expansion in the next few years. The badly needed locomotives and agricultural machinery can be obtained in England, Germany, Italy. The enormous purchases which Soviet Russia would like to make will be postponed, and the burden for the loss of trade will fall on the American workers and farmers.

But the Capitalist class cannot "improve labor's morale" which translated means low wages and long hours, without ruining the home market. Poorly paid workmen and moneyless farmers make poor customers. Hence it is obliged to look for business abroad. This is what happened after the crisis of 1893. The volume of our foreign business rose till it reached 23 per cent of domestic trade in 1897; with the improvement of living conditions in the period 1897-1910, foreign trade declined to only 10 per cent in that year. In other words it is the experience of

American industrial development that exports must increase with a declining domestic demand. Russia therefore cannot be excluded from available markets for American trade. And it does not matter if Russia has "no export commodities today worth consideration." She has vast resources of mineral wealth, of forests, of agriculture. In 1917 the United States offered to advance Russia a credit of two billion dollars, according to a statement of Senator France in his debate with Senator King at Carnegie Hall on March 27th. What guarantees were required then? Certainly none more sound than the Soviet Government offers today.

In its proposal the Soviet Government expresses the hope that "the new American government will clearly see the great advantage for the two republics of the reestablishment of business relations and will consider the interests of both peoples which imperatively demand that the wall existing between them should be removed." In the opinion of some editors, Secretary Hughes didn't absolutely refuse to remove this wall; his note, they think, invites further pourparlers. (The statement of Superintendent Baker of the mint that Russian gold bearing the stamp of a foreign government will be accepted, would tend to confirm this opinion.) Perhaps the American Capitalist class, in its need for foreign trade, is preparing a scheme to trade with Soviet Russia without letting the world know that it is doing so. Perhaps it expects to sell to England and Germany for transhipment to Soviet Russia. But there, we believe, the Capitalist calculations will go wrong. For that's exactly what Soviet Russia will not have:—camouflaged relations or round about dealings. Soviet Russia will certainly refuse to patronize the American market through no matter what agents, without proper recognition being accorded to her.

American Labor must take a page from English experience. Lloyd George, the attorney for the English Capitalist Class, was forced to come to an agreement with Soviet Russia, not because the English Capitalists love the Russians more than the American or need their gold more, but because the



The Socialist Party Rises to the Defense

Working Class of England had put an ultimatum to Mr. George and was ready to back that ultimatum with the full power of their organizations. The American workingmen, dominated as they are by archaic and reactionary labor leaders, cannot hope to produce the slightest influence on Mr. Hughes or Mr. Hoover, cannot hope to better themselves until they determine to fight for what they demand, until the power they possess is concentrated, until they put on full steam ahead.

Getting Organized

By J. LOUIS ENGDAHL, *Secretary*

Committee for the Third International, of the Socialist Party of the United States.

The announcement of the organization of the "Committee for the Third International of the Socialist Party of the United States" has been received with enthusiasm. The reception it has been given is proof of its need and assurance that it has a big mission to perform.

No spokesman of our party has yet gone to Moscow to speak officially for the American Socialist Party. Yet the first and second congresses have come and gone, and the third will no doubt soon take place. Why is this so?

News comes that the Detroit, Michigan, and the Seattle, Washington, Central Labor Federations have voted to send delegates to the Congress of the Red International of Trade and Industrial Unions, that meets Sunday, July 1st, in Moscow, at the call of the Third International. How many more central labor bodies and individual unions are discussing this matter, at this hour, we do not know. Their number is growing daily. Surely the masses are moving.

It is the first task of the Committee on the Third International to let the membership and the sympathizers of the Socialist party know what the hopes and aspirations of the Committee are.

We therefore publish in full the original call for the organization of the committee. It is as follows:

"FOR THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL."

"A group of comrades, active members of the Socialist Party, propose to organize within the party, and for work in the Party, a 'Committee for the Third International.' The undersigned comrades are of the opinion that the actual process of disintegration that our party is going through can be arrested only by the party's adopting as guidance for its action the principles and the spirit enunciated by the Third International.

"This involves unequivocal propaganda and work along the lines of uncompromising class struggle, the open and courageous stand for the Third International and for the Soviet Government of Russia.

"The 'Committee for the Third International' will act in the open, giving the names of the members, and will consider itself a legally and legitimately functioning body within the Socialist Party. Headquarters of the Committee will be at Chicago, Illinois, and Comrade J. Louis Engdahl is acting as secretary to the Committee.

"The membership of the committee will be scattered all over the states and will act through correspondence with the office of the Secretary, at 1400 N. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

"There will be a system of representatives, local and regional, of the Committee for the Third.

"The Committee adopts the following passage as its statement of affiliation:

"The Party shall cease all activities and attempts for the organization or support of the "Fourth," or any other new or old International, except "The Third." We favor affiliation without reservations, with the Third International. The announced "21 Articles of Affiliation" are not, in our opinion, a hindrance toward affiliation."

"We hold that all discussion as to the applicability in the United States at the present time of



certain principles or tactics, as proposed by the Third International, should be carried on within the International, and not from without. The Socialist Party of the United States must, therefore, give its wholehearted support to the Third International and must arrange its organization and propaganda accordingly.

"The Committee for the Third shall develop a systematic and persistent campaign of propaganda for affiliation with the Third, utilizing for the purpose all the available space in the party press, as well as other sympathetic publications, the forums and business meetings of the party organizations, etc. Particular stress shall be laid on the period of propaganda prior to and during the coming party convention. For this purpose, the committee, or its local and regional representatives shall be obliged to secure speakers and provide appropriate literature for all organizations where the matter of the Third is up for discussion and action.

"The Committee for the Third is aware of the difficulties it is likely to encounter along the lines of publicity. It is therefore advisable that ways and means shall be considered for the establishment of a publishing group of its own, or to affiliate with sympathetic workers' publishing institutions for the purpose of procuring all the necessary pamphlets, and a periodical publication.

"The Committee for the Third International, of the Socialist Party of the United States."

Among the original signers of this call are the following, who were delegates to the 1920 Socialist Party convention:

J. Louis Engdahl, Chicago.
Steven Bircher, Newark, N. J.
Benjamin Glassberg, New York.
Alexander Trachtenberg, New York.
Samuel Holland, Chicago.
Charles Kolarik, Chicago.
J. B. Salutsky, New York.

The Plight of the American Farmer

By PROF. ARTHUR W. CALHOUN

With very few exceptions, the agricultural group in the United States is miserably victimized by the current economic system. There are a few farmers, perhaps, whose landownership more than offsets the amount to which they are exploited by the capitalist system of exchange; but in most instances the economic advantage of proprietorship is undoubtedly far from compensating for the disadvantage of having to operate under the conditions of an unjust and inefficient business regime. If the American farmer had enough information and enough training in logical thought, he would be an absolute revolutionist instead of an occasional insurgent.

If statistics carried conviction, it would be easy to prove to the typical farmer that he belongs to the labor group and that he is in no sense a beneficiary of the current system. Figuring a moderate wage for the farmer and the members of the family who work with him, we find that his interest as a laborer is far in excess of his stake as a proprietor. Ordinarily, however, the farm family does not receive anything like a fair labor income and if the facts were thoroughly familiar the farmer would have to reckon himself as the victim of a sweated industry. It is largely the fact that farm ownership provides a steady job and, where the land is good, yields an element of property income to supplement or conceal the smallness of the labor income that obscures the real situation and sustains the capitalist psychology on the farm.

A further element in the farmers' resistance to communistic proposals is the general confusion between the farmstead as an industrial plant and as a homestead. The advantages of homeownership are assumed, and then the concept is unwittingly extended to cover the whole farm, as if the whole area were the home. In reality, much of the benefit of having a sure place of abode is negatived by the fact that the family is required to live in the midst of the industrial plant and can never for a

moment forget the overwhelming responsibility for all the multifarious details of a complicated economic operation which in most instances has to be carried on with insufficient capital and with no assurance of reasonable returns. The real charm of the farm home consists, not in the grain fields and the cattle pastures, but in the garden, the orchard, the poultry yard, and the other incidental surroundings of the rural home, which usually are intended primarily for family use and only incidentally as yielding a product for sale on the market. It is true that many a farm income is considerably augmented by the sale of products from these sources, but they are secondary considerations to the average general crop farmer. Moreover the claims of his economic plant (his field agriculture) very often entirely overshadow the needs of the home and bring it to pass that his barns and machinery show an abundance of up-to-date equipment while the home is still primitive and desolate of the essentials of comfort and health. The home loses rather than gains by its close association with an industrial process. Indeed, over large areas, the farm population has no kitchen gardens and no orchards and absolutely none of the other features that are supposed to glorify rural life. The South is covered with a pauperized population of helpless serfs whose life in the home is substantially equivalent to the horrors of the slum.

A socialist approach to the rural problem will have to include such considerations as the shrinking proportions of the farm population; the increasing proportion of farm tenancy in such areas as possess sufficient fertility to yield a considerable economic rent; the enormous burden of farm mortgages, whose horror is much the same whether they rest upon a man working out of tenancy in the direction of possible unencumbered ownership or upon a farmer whose ownership is slipping away from him; the oppression of the whole farming class by the purveyors of machinery, supplies, and

credit, and by the system through which they are forced to market their products. If it could be vividly presented to the farmers in its appalling detail that their multifarious reform projects of the past fifty years, whether along the lines of drives for financial relief, for control of carriers and warehouses, for subjugation of the big manufacturing interests with which they have to contend, for the development of co-operative agencies, has yielded paltry results entirely incommensurate with the efforts expended, there would be a new state of mind among the rural proprietors. Moreover there exists over large sections of the country an agricultural wage-proletariat which comes in the same class as the victims of the steel mills and the metal mines.

There is no use of fumbling the situation. For socialists to concede private operation of agriculture is falsity to the principles of the movement; not so much because provision for private proprietorship in this field after the weight of external exploitation had been removed from it, would erect a specially privileged class as because it is impos-

sible for small scale, planless farming to feed the world. We must be not merely consistent, but also frank with the farmer. It ought to be made clear that general agriculture will have to be conducted on an enormous scale according to methods approximating the exactness and mechanism of the factory system and that no vestige of private ownership or control can be allowed to remain. It must be made equally clear that there shall be a reconstruction of rural life that will guarantee to each family the inalienable occupancy of a suitable home with as much space and facilities as may be desirable for garden, family orchard, poultry, and dairy, according to the tastes of each family. Thus the valuable elements of the present system may persist (in much improved form), and at the same time the demands of the consuming population may be satisfied. It is entirely possible to work out a line of appeal that will commend itself to the common-sense of the vast majority of the agricultural population as soon as they can by some means be lifted out of the fog of the capitalist dictatorship.

The Resurrected Second International

By LUDWIG LORE

The conference of the 2½ International that was held in Vienna from the 25th to the 28th of February was met with open hostility by the supporters of the Third International everywhere. Their opposition was more than the prejudiced criticism of a political opponent. It was rooted in the conviction that this new International is only an endeavor to resuscitate the old Socialist International, under a new firm name. Certainly there is nothing that divides the leading spirits of the 2½ from the old Second International, but their attitude on war policies. Beyond that they are heart and soul in accord. Friedrich Adler, the press agent of the Vienna Conference, expresses this quite openly in a letter written to Ramsay Macdonald, now secretary of the Second International.

"Circumstances have forced us in the last two years, in order to clarify our position upon political questions of immediate importance, to discuss frequently and at some length our differences with the Third International. Those points that separate us from the Second International have, meanwhile, been left practically without discussion, because they are concerned, in the main, with socialist policies during the war. A discussion of principles with the Second International will be, above all, a discussion of socialist action in times of war, of that position which we have become accustomed to call social patriotism."

Friedrich Adler finds it unnecessary to discuss the policies of the Second after the war. He knows nothing of Noske's massacres, he has forgotten Scheidemann's coalition manoeuvres, he no longer remembers Thomas' ministerialism, he recalls neither Branting's short-lived ministerial honors nor Henderson's or Clynes' "strictly socialistic labor policies" that left the cart of the British Labor movement hopelessly stuck in the mud.

"If the Second International," the letter goes

on, "whose secretary you have become, to our great surprise, consisted only of persons of your calibre, all further discussion would be superfluous." Somehow this assurance sounds strongly like the Anti-Semite who had a habit of assuring every Jew with whom he came in contact, "Ah, dear Sir, if all Jews were like you, there would be no Anti-Semites."

But Adler finds it necessary to prove beyond all doubt, that only mere formalities divide himself and his colleagues of the 2½ from Ramsay Macdonald and the Second. For this reason he defines his position toward the Russian revolution so as to leave no doubt as to where he stands.

"It was this anarchy in the International that gave Lenin the opportunity to throw the working-class, not only of Russia, but of the whole world, into one of the most dangerous experiments, without consulting the representatives of the class-conscious proletariat in other countries." Thus the leading personality of the "new" International takes his stand definitely and aggressively against the Russian revolution. The presence and active participation of Martow and Abramowitz in the Conference and in the committees served only to underscore what was already obvious.

* * *

Nevertheless the creation of the 2½ International, whatever may become of it, was inevitable. It gives expression to the natural after-war development of those proletarian parties which do not approve, on the one hand, of open coalition with the bourgeois government, and which, on the other, cannot be content with a negative position of the working-class parties in every country. The world war which ended not with a proletarian revolution but with a military victory of one of the two imperialistic groups, did not realize the cherished hopes of the "loyal" workers. They had believed what their labor union and party leaders had told them, had

counted upon the gratitude of the bourgeoisie in return for their sacrifices and their sufferings, had hoped that now, when once the war was over an era of peace, brotherliness and democracy would set in. In the victorious nations not the proletarian revolution, but Wilson's Fourteen Points became the supreme hope of the working-class, as the enthusiastic reception that Woodrow Wilson met at the hands of the masses in France, Great Britain and Italy plainly demonstrated. The awakening was as swift as it was brutal. The bourgeoisie recovered from the fright that followed the October revolutions. It had honestly feared that these demobilized hundreds of thousands of workers would call them to account. But the bourgeoisie makes concessions to the proletariat only when it feels its hands at its throats. And the workers never dreamed of doing any harm to their "allies and associates" in the great war for imperialism.

In Germany it soon felt so secure, that it deprived the Workmens' and Soldiers' Councils of all governmental functions. In England the bourgeoisie forgot that it had, at one time, almost guaranteed the nationalization of the mines. In France everything that is reactionary united to take up the fight against Bolshevism. The Versailles Treaty showed, furthermore, how truthfully the Communists in all countries had spoken, when they maintained that there could be no peace—and certainly no just peace—so long as the bourgeoisie remained at the helm. Eastern Europe was driven into intervention after intervention in Soviet Russia, until its very foundations are tottering under the strain. The Central Powers were deprived of the possibility of industrial recuperation. The brief period of prosperity that followed the armistice, came to an abrupt close. It is becoming daily more obvious that the world cannot recover while one half of the world is condemned to industrial ruin. And in the ears of the working-class there rings unceasingly the grim and sinister question: "Who is to pay?"

These are the influences that are steadily at work, radicalizing the masses. The proletariat is recognizing the impotence of the capitalist world, the hopelessness of reestablishing even capitalistic conditions as they were before the war. In Great Britain a strong revolutionary tendency is making itself distinctly felt in the labor movement, demanding, insisting upon the nationalization of the railways and the mines. In France organized labor is turning more and more openly against the bourgeois democracy. Even in the United States, we have lived to see large portions of the A. F. of L. organization in rebellion against the dictatorship of Gompers.

This state of affairs offers a rich field of activity for a movement that stands midway between the radical and the openly opportunistic wing, that stands, in theory, upon the principles of Marxism without carrying out these principles to their practical ultimate application. Germany had given an example of this triple division even before the war, for the German movement was even then sharply divided, in spirit if not in fact, the Center about Kautsky holding out against the Bernstein opportunists on the Right and against the radical wing, under the leadership of Luxemburg, Zetkin, Mehring and Liebknecht on the question of mass-action

and imperialism on the Left. During the war, this center had stood, either openly with reformism, or had contented itself with passively protesting against the social patriotic policies of the Right, the same straddling policy that they are continuing to the present day, unable to become the bearers of a radical labor movement on the one hand, and unwilling to oppose it openly on the other. They met this difficult situation by winning the support of the masses with a pretense of revolutionary thought on the one hand and by holding back the masses from revolutionary action on the other.

Along these lines of thought the Vienna conference did its work. It adopted sounding revolutionary phrases, its attacks however were directed not against the Second, but against the Third International. Friedrich Adler opened the Conference by calling upon all delegates to forgive each other their war-sins and to think only of the present, that the Second International is dead, but that it is unseemly to speak of it as the Third International has done. Of "Moscow" he spoke in a different tone. Moscow seeks to divide the proletariat, Vienna will unite it. In closing he sang the praises of the Amsterdam Labor Union International, "which alone holds the power to unite the workers of the whole world."

The conviction that there could be no understanding between Vienna and the Third International was the Leitmotiv of every speech that was delivered. Surely there was little need of these protestations. Much more to the point would have been some differentiation between the Second and Vienna. Nothing of the sort was so much as attempted, probably because there is no difference that would go beneath the surface. Indeed a resolution was unanimously adopted that says: "The International Socialist Conference in Vienna calls upon all workers to unify the socialist movement in the various countries. It is determined to work for this unification to the utmost upon the basis of the motions here adopted, and calls upon the Socialists of all nations to support its endeavors." In other words, a unification from Noske to Bauer, of course on the above-named basis. But since this "basis" provides for intimate cooperation between Bauer and the raging social-patriots Renaudel, Scheidemann, Vandervelde, Branting, and all the other fossils of a long forgotten period in the international movement with "radicals" like Ledebour, Longuet and Nobs will find in this new international a harmonious meeting place.

True, the report of the Committee on Ways and Methods of Organization of the Class Struggle stressed the necessity of a proletarian dictatorship after the political supremacy of the proletariat has been established. According to its report of the democratic power of the state, it recognized the existence of a wide-spread desire for a united instrument of the entire class-conscious proletariat.

The value that such platonic declarations have may be judged from the fact that even Renaudel, the most determined opponent of proletarian dictatorship as well as the representatives of the Polish Socialist Party which fully supported its government in the war with Soviet Russia, found it pos-

sible to vote without a visible qualm for this ambiguous flourish.

Equally amusing was the position taken by the conference to that central problem in West-European proletarian polities, the Peace Conference, and the reparation crisis. Nothing could have shown more plainly, that the unity of their capitalist classes is the first premise of the unity of the parties that comprise this new International. Its great aim is to be not the revolutionary education of the masses in times of national capitalist conflicts, but the reconciliation,—upon a purely pacifistic program—of the capitalist enemies with each other.

The Leitmotiv of the resolutions that were adopted on the question of reparations might well be expressed by the words "Capitalists of all countries, unite." After acknowledging the declarations adopted by the various menshevist parties, and concurring in the proposal of the French Party that a conference of the menshevist parties of Germany, France and England—an exact replica of the notorious London Conference of the great powers—be called, the resolution goes on as follows:

"The conference regards the internationalization of all war debts and the rendering of unlimited assistance by those countries which suffered least under the devastations of the world war to those which bore the brunt of destruction, in the building up of their productive and consumptive forces as the supreme necessity in the regulation of the problem of reparations. The conference maintains that the capitalist governments are incapable of solving the problems opened up by the war. It warns the working-class in all countries to guard against the meth-

ods employed by their governments and their chauvinistic press to carry on their dangerous and insidious propaganda among the masses."

That these gentlemen also declared for disarmament goes without saying. They all but indorsed the League of Nations, and even that distinction has been achieved by some of its individual participants in the past. Indeed, the whole conference fairly oozed pacifistic sentimentality. Under these circumstances, to be sure, the fight against the Treaty of Versailles became little more than a lame gesture. The Powers behind this treaty have only one foe whom they need fear: Moscow and the Third International. By the same token the Vienna Conference directs its venom against the Third as its own most dangerous opponent. It refuses the unification of all revolutionary elements and proclaims, instead, the unification of capitalism by pacifistic phrases.

Unquestionably the time is not far distant when this conglomeration of pacifistic phrasemongers will unite with its half brother, the Second International, the latter supplying the masses, the former the bait in the shape of revolutionary slogans. For it is a fact that in Germany, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, in Great Britain and in practically every other nation in Europe the big majority of the socialistically inclined workers stand behind their reformistic social patriots.

And in the struggle that will follow, the working-class will be forced by the ruthless logic of events, to recognize that their leaders are, intentionally or unintentionally, the tools of the capitalist class against the revolutionary forces represented by the Communist International.

The Commune: Half a Century of Struggle: 1871-1921

II.

The Central Committee of the national guard now took over the government. This committee consisted of three delegates for each of the twenty precincts (arrondissements) of Paris. Two of the three were chosen by the council of the Legion, the third by the battalion commandant of the Legion. The battalions of one arrondissement taken together comprised a legion. On March 19th the Central Committee met in council to decide what was to be done. It decided to appeal at once to the voters, in other words to proceed to the election of a communal administration for Paris. These elections took place on March 26th, and then the Central Committee surrendered its powers to the Commune. There were elected 90 members of the Commune. These included 15 adherents of the former government and 6 bourgeois-radicals, who had been opposed to the government but condemned the revolt. The great majority of the members of the Commune stood on the side of the revolt. On the other hand, not all the revolutionary members of the Commune were socialists.

Meanwhile the Commune proceeded at once to work. One of its most important measures was the decree concerning shops and factories, providing for the municipal operation of the shops that had been

closed down by the manufacturers, while at the same time plans were made for handing over these shops to co-operative associations of the workers formerly employed in them; these co-operatives in turn were to be united into large federations. Here then we have a positive infringement upon the property rights of the capitalists. The expropriators were themselves expropriated and the means of labor were returned to the disinherited masses. The remaining social decrees of the Commune likewise bear a distinct proletarian character. Thus the Commune abolished night work for bakery workers, abolished the system of checking up workers which had heretofore constituted the monopoly of certain individuals appointed by the police, forbade the reduction of wages by the impositions of fines and the like on the part of the employers, and encouraged the workers' associations to place before the authorities at the city hall their opinions in regard to all decrees that seemed essential in the interests of the working class. The Commune regulated the housing system, ordaining the remission of all rents for the period from October to April, crediting the sums already paid in the interim to future rent, incidentally forbidding all landlords to dispossess their tenants. The Commune further prohibited the sale of pledges in the municipal pawn-office, aiming

at the abolition of the pawn-shops themselves, which were in opposition to the right of the worker to the instruments of labor and to credit. The liquidation of the pawn-shops was to be followed by the regulation of unemployment. The victims of the war, and the needy and helpless were paid voluntary pensions from the public treasury. The social character of the Commune became more apparent from day to day, or, as the pamphlet on the Civil War puts it: "Its own existence as a working body constituted its great social measure." Besides all this, however, the political measures of the Commune likewise assured the working class freedom of movement. The state of siege was at once lifted and a general amnesty declared for all political crimes and offenses. Church and state were strictly separated. The clerical estates were transformed into national property, the support of church organizations by the public treasury ceased. The church was separated from the schools, and the latter were cleansed of all religious symbols, dogmas and prayers. A complete revolution of marriage and family rights was contained in the provisions recognizing as binding any union of a man and woman living together as mates and paying all soldier's widows alike regardless of the form in which the marriage had been consummated. The Commune burned the guillotine and tore down the Vendome column—an act that constituted a declaration of war against the entire nationalistic tradition—that famous symbol of war and radical persecution which Napoleon I. had made out of captured cannon after his victory over Austria in 1809. Foreigners enjoyed all the rights of citizenship. Foreigners even held important posts in the Commune, since "the flag of the Commune is that of the world-republic," a declaration of principles that was of greater import and significance than any that had heretofore been uttered by any revolution.

But the Commune went on to change fundamentally the entire machinery of state and administration. The military and the police disappeared. The standing army and conscription were abolished and the national guard declared the only authorized armed force. The Commune held supreme power, being at the same time a legislative and an executive organ, not a parliamentarian but a working body. All offices had to be administered on laborers' pay, thus avoiding once and for all the danger of reviving a bureaucratic class.

* * *

The bourgeois class and the members and adherents of the old government became enraged at this state of affairs. This Commune was not only a workers' government, it constituted the worst violation of the rights of citizenship, an abuse of political power. This Communism was nothing more than barbarism and savagery, this rule of the rabble in reality the tyranny imposed by an insignificant minority over deluded, ignorant masses. This rage of the bourgeoisie is the most effective answer to the doubts that have been occasionally expressed as to whether the Commune was actually a working-class government, as the memorial on the Civil War declares. Reference is usually made to the large number of petty-bourgeois individuals among the members of the Commune as well as to the confused

minds and the mere talkers who frequently appeared on the scene. Whenever there was an important question to be decided, long discussions and hot debates would take place, so that actually one could gain the impression that the Commune was not only without a program but even without guiding principles.

But strong as were the internal dissensions and violent as was the struggle of various factions for leadership, the spirit of the workers prevailed and asserted itself throughout. The workers impressed their stamp upon the Commune. And just as it is sufficient for an accurate answer to the question of whether the Commune was actually and essentially a government of the working-class, to point to the decrees of the Commune, so the government at Versailles with the unerring instinct of ruling classes for maintaining their positions of power, recognized on the very first day the fundamental difference of the new and the old power and the total incompatibility of the two forms. The old government with its headquarters at Versailles at once called a strike of all officials, in order to deal the Commune a death-blow at its very beginning, and the upper bureaucracy willingly responded. As at a common signal the various administrations—city tax bureau, roads commission, street-lighting department, public charities, postal and telegraph service—ceased to function. The trade halls, the markets, all the intricate digestive and respiratory organs of the great metropolis suddenly became paralyzed. The example of the officials was followed by a part of the bourgeois population, like the physicians and a portion of the professional personnel of the hospitals. But within two days this manoeuvre was completely played out, due to the energy of the Commune and the readiness of the lesser officials and the petty-bourgeois elements to co-operate.

What stand did the Commune take in connection with the war? The traditional revolutionary conception of France would have demanded a defense of the inviolability of the national territory. But with the conclusion of peace on the part of the bourgeoisie the question of the war was likewise settled as far as the proletariat was concerned. In view of the desire of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry for peace and in view of the exhaustion of the petty-bourgeois, any attempt to resume the defensive struggle would have encountered the united opposition of all France. The Commune adapted itself to this situation. In its very first declaration the Commune declared that it considered the war at an end and that its only dispute now was with Versailles. The future universal world-republic of the proletariat, it was assumed, would eventually cope with the policy of conquest of Bismarck. And so the call for the Commune acquired a new and changed significance. Paris in arms and the rapidly arming forces of reaction stood facing one another on the hard ground of power and reality.

The Paris Commune, surrounded though it was by a world of enemies, nevertheless permitted itself to commit two fatal errors. It neglected the necessary military safeguards and omitted the seizure of the Bank of France. The troops of the Versailles government were permitted to withdraw in full force

and completely armed from Paris; important strategic posts were left unguarded; the organization of the defense was placed in incompetent and un-dependable hands; there was no definite plan against Versailles. The Bank of France at that time possessed a capital of three billion francs besides 90,000 deposits. The seizure of this institution would have delivered the entire bourgeoisie of France into the hands of the Commune and might possibly have caused the government at Versailles to plead for negotiations. Even the adherents of Proudhon in the Commune seemed to have forgotten that their master had placed at the head of his program the demand for the suppression of the Bank of France.

* * *

On April 2, the Versailles government was already prepared to begin its attack upon Paris. An attempted sally of the Communards failed, and only a few days later the government troops forced the passage at Neuilly. Beginning with May 6th, Paris was again inclosed on all sides, as in the days of the German siege. On May 9th the first of the forts surrendered, on the 14th the second fell; eight days later the Versailles troops set foot upon the ground of the city itself. Then began the street fighting. The struggle became more bitter day by day. Then the Prussians opened the neutral zone they were occupying, enabling the troops of Versailles to attack the Communards in the rear and flank. The last struggle was the more intense for its hopelessness. It was only on the eighth day that the last defenders succumbed on the heights of Belleville and Menilmontant. The government troops instituted a terrible massacre. Whoever was caught in the national guard uniform, whoever wore army shoes, whoever showed on his clothing traces of military facings since ripped off, was shot at once. The rifles of the soldiers were not equal to the bloody task. So the prisoners were gathered in crowds and finished off by means of artillery fire. The "citizens' guard" appeared on the scene—the national guard of the forces of law and order—showing off their armbands as a mark of honor for being permitted to direct the executions. Toward the end of the struggle, the Prussians surrounded the hunted game. Their officers drove back to the executioners all those soldiers of the federated legions who attempted to cross the line. This mass slaughter lasted until the early days of June, the summary executions well into the middle of the month. The military admitted 17,000 executions. From May 21 to May 30, the representatives of law and order gathered some 40,000 prisoners, including numerous women and children. There were counted no less than 400,000 denunciations, of which a large share may be credited to the press. The press rejoiced that there are 100,000 voters less than there were in the February elections! And Thiers stood up proudly in the national assembly to announce: "We are honest people. Law will be administered according to the common statutes. We shall have recourse only to the law."

The Commune lay shattered and lifeless on the ground. It failed because of the support given by

the foreign foe to the bourgeois government of France, because of the unrestrained animosity of the rural population, because of the unwillingness to co-operate and the indecision of the workers and petty-bourgeoisie of the other French cities. It failed not because the economic status of the country had not attained sufficient maturity, but because the re-classification of society, conditioned by the methods of production, had not yet developed in a sufficient degree, because the industrial worker had not yet acquired a position of sufficient strength in society to remain permanently in power. The Commune failed because it was impossible for it to conquer. . .

Without number were the victims who died in the prisons, for after the defeat of the Commune there broke out a perfect orgy of "justice." Thousands were sent away to the watery wastes of the Pacific Ocean. When the parliament ended its term in 1876 it shortened a few prison sentences and granted 600 pardons. This was the extent of its mercy. And when the new Chamber with its republican majority went into session, it too refused amnesty to the Communards. And as late as the winter of that year the military courts tried cases and inflicted death penalties for participation in the May battles. And yet the bourgeoisie spilled the blood of the people in vain; in vain did they condemn innumerable youths and aged men to rot in prison hells, in vain did they deliver women and girls into the hands of the Bagno of New Caledonia. From the graves of these thousands have sprouted all the more profusely and richly the seeds of revolution, and out of the blood and flames and smoking ruins of Paris, that mother of the European Revolution, arose the reality of proletarian dictatorship, of the free Commune, lighting its inextinguishable fires in every corner of the globe.

(To be concluded)



Communist International

NEXT CONGRESS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The Executive Committee of the Communist International has decided to convene the 3rd Congress of the Third Communist International on the 1st of June 1921.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted the following provisional agenda:

DRAFT OF AGENDA FOR THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

1. Report of the Executive of the Communist International.

2. The economic world-crisis and the new tasks of the Communist International.

3. Tactics of the Communist International during the Revolution.

4. Transition-period (special requirements, special actions and final struggle of the Revolution).

5. Fight against the Amsterdam yellow Trade Union Federation.

6. The Red Trade Union International and the Communist International.

7. Construction of the Communist Parties, the methods of their work.

8. Construction of the Communist International and its relation to the affiliated parties.

9. The Eastern question.

10. The Italian Socialist Party and the Communist International. (Appeal of the Italian Socialist Party against the resolution of the Executive Committee).

11. The Communist Labor Party of Germany and the Communist International. (Appeal of the United Communist Party of Germany against the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International).

12. The Women's Movement.

13. The Young Communist Movement.

14. Election of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Headquarters of the E. C.

15. Other business.

G. ZINOVIEV.

* * *

1) The Executive affirms its resolution in the Italian question and continues to support the Communist Party of Italy.

2) The Executive protests most determinedly against the support given by one of the presidents of the United Communist Party, Com. Levi, to the centrist fraction Serratti in Livorno and after Livorno. The Executive is firmly convinced that the overwhelming majority of the German sister-party on the Italian question is on the side of the Italian Communists and of the Executive and not on the side of Com. Levi.

3) The Executive declares its agreement with the resolution of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of February 1st and begs the Central Committee not to recognize any explanations of this resolution which could mean support of the Centrist Serratti fraction and create difficulties to the Italian Communists.

This resolution was unanimously adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International after an exact examination of the situation. The representatives of the United Communist Party of Germany voted for the points 1 and 3 and against point 2.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

Manager's Column

Americans are hungry readers; they consume more printed paper than other people consume sugar or fat. Their appetite seems to be growing too; statistics show a per capita consumption of news print paper of 7.5 pounds in 1899, grown to *thirty-three* pounds in 1918. We are literally swallowing our forests—in the shape of printed dope—and if this pace continues, we shall have to resort again to stone and clay to carry our tales.

* * *

Imagine thirty-three pounds of newsprint for every man, woman and child in the United States. What a volume of misinformation, of lies, of poison from which you cannot escape. It assails you from the sporting page, from every flaunting advertisement, from school books, from the very food you eat. And as a light red thread through it all runs the Socialist press; sometimes so faintly pink that you can hardly perceive it; at other times a glaring red streak, like a burst of sunrays at dawn.

* * *

There are thirty-eight million working men and women in this country and to them The Workers' Council ought to bring new light and hope. One of these thirty-eight millions to whom farming in Georgia is "especially gloomy" is yet "very anxious to know something about this 3rd International and Socialism in general. Can't take no stock on those subjects from what the capitalistic press say." Or as a comrade from Utica writes, "I find that it (The Workers' Council) is very interesting, leaning toward an able construction of purpose, and to me it is instructive and desirable."

* * *

And the gist of this story is just how to bring The Workers' Council to those who are "anxious to know" and to whom it is desirable and instructive. The answer is in your hands, Comrade. Send us your subscription, get your friend to subscribe; get up a list of names and addresses of your fellow-workers and mail it to us. Perhaps you can sell some copies of The Workers' Council in your spare time. Send for a bundle, at special rates. Talk about the magazine, recommend it to your friends, tell the Editors what you think of it. Be up and doing!

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